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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Letter dated 7 July 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Chair of the Special Committee

I would like to acknowledge once again your effective guidance of the recent meetings of the Special Committee and, in particular, the meeting on Gibraltar, held on 16 June 2014.

However, as is now unfortunately often the case, some speakers representing positions of the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Gibraltar fail to respect the most basic norms of decorum in their statements, do not refrain from making personal observations and digress from the items under consideration when they address the Committee, in violation of United Nations rules and practice for such meetings.

This was the case of the non-governmental organization Self-determination for Gibraltar Group (SDGG), whose representative, Mr. Dennis Matthews, once again disregarded the recommendations of the Chair of the Special Committee, as well as the rules and practices of the United Nations.

The meeting on 16 June 2014 was the third time that a representative of SDGG addressed one of the United Nations decolonization bodies as a petitioner, having already addressed the Special Committee and the Fourth Committee in 2013, and on each occasion the SDGG representative has displayed an attitude that is wholly incompatible with the norms for participation in a public meeting of the United Nations. In 2013, for example, the SDGG representative accused the Government of Spain before the Fourth Committee of action that could be described as "acts of terrorism".

At the meeting on 16 June 2014, Mr. Matthews once again behaved in a wholly unsuitable and unacceptable manner by making totally inappropriate references to "corruption scandals" in Spain and linking them to the Royal Family and the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla, which, moreover, constitutes an intervention in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of Spain, which is prohibited under Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter of the United Nations.

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Logically, the Spanish delegation accepts, as shown by its actions, that the issue before the Special Committee meeting in question, namely the decolonization of the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Gibraltar, should be the subject of debate; however, it strongly objects to matters within the domestic jurisdiction of Spain being raised, as well as to Spain, the Spanish people and their institutions being insulted, in a public meeting of the United Nations.

I therefore wish to thank you for calling the SDGG representative to order and for admonishing him to refrain from passing judgement on the internal affairs of another country.

Looking ahead, I hereby transmit the Spanish delegation's objection, in the strongest terms, to the Gibraltarian non-governmental organization SDGG being allowed to participate, as a petitioner, in future meetings of the Special Committee, and I ask that measures be taken to avoid incidents such as that of 16 June 2014 recurring as a result of the unacceptable behaviour of a petitioner. In this regard, it should be noted that in the meetings of both the Special Committee and the Fourth Committee this particular Gibraltarian petitioner is the only one who has displayed the kind of behaviour objected to here.

I would also like to draw attention to two separate issues raised by the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Mr. Fabian Picardo, during the meeting on 16 June 2014: the dispatch of a visiting mission to Gibraltar; and the holding of the regional seminar on decolonization in Gibraltar.

Firstly, Spain fully supports the doctrine of the United Nations and the practice of the Special Committee in this regard, according to which visiting missions can be sent only to territories to which the right to self-determination applies and not to those where the right to territorial integrity is applicable, as in the cases, such as that of the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Gibraltar, that are subject to a sovereignty dispute. This condition is fully consistent with General Assembly resolution 850 (IX) and the practice of the Special Committee.

Secondly, Spain wishes to highlight the fact that, as set out in General Assembly resolution 65/119 of 10 December 2010 and the Plan of Action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism of 22 March 2001 (see A/56/61, annex), currently in force, regional seminars on decolonization are to be held "in the Caribbean and Pacific regions alternately, as well as at United Nations Headquarters".

I should be grateful if you would have this letter issued as a document of the Special Committee.

(*Signed*) Román **Oyarzun Marchesi**